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BETHEL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF BETHEL'S VERNON STREET

by Geraldine S. Howe

Editor's Note: This survey was presented at the November 1, 1990 meeting of the Bethel Historical Society. It has been revised and updated for this issue of the Courier. The author is grateful to all who helped her in the research for this article, particularly Jack and Sue Cross, Rita Wilson and Arlan Jodrey.

Vernon Street was laid out three rods wide in 1855 by order of the County Commissioners. According to popular belief, it received its name because one of the first houses on the street, that of Clark S. Edwards, was said to remind residents of George Washington's Mount Vernon. Landowners along the proposed route were given one year to get all marketable timber off the land and within two years of the settlement were to "open and make said road safe and convenient for travelers and their horses, teams, carts and carriages."

One of the street's special features is that on the east side for more than half its distance, it is bordered by what was once extensive and rich meadowland, some of it now grown up to bushes and trees. Here for generations, Bethel residents were able to obtain good hay crops for livestock, particularly horses and cows. That fact also helps to explain why several prominent Bethel residents built barns along this street for hay storage.

Beginning at the corner of Vernon and Main streets on the easterly side is found the home of John Shorb (1). It was built in the mid-19th century by the Foster family, who came to Bethel from Newry. Thomas Jefferson Foster (1824-1905) is listed on this site in the 1880 Atlas. His daughter Hattie (1855-1931) was the last of the family to live here. From her estate the property was sold to Tena M. Thurston (1867-1955), mother of Hugh Thurston (1886-1966). Tena Thurston sold the property to her daughter in law, Alma Thurston (1888-1983) in 1939. It was sold from Alma Thurston estate in 1985 to John Shorb. Hattie Foster wanted this property to become a rest home or a home for women owned by the Congregational Church to be known as The Foster Home. Apparently there were problems with this proposal since the Congregational Church sold its interest in the property to Tena Thurston. Miss Foster also left a T.J. Foster Fund to the Congregational Church.

(2) John and Fumiko Head House

This house, one of the first on the street, was built in the middle of the 19th century by Col. Clark S. Edwards (1824-1903). The story goes that Edwards was on the roof shingling when the news of the Civil War came to him in 1861.



Calvin Bisbee Residence, Vernon Street, late 19th century

He immediately applied for and received recruiting papers. Edwards was chosen Captain of the first company organized in Oxford County; it later became Company I, 5th Maine Regiment. He was rapidly promoted and soon commanded the regiment, which he led in the outstanding engagements of the Army of the Potomac, including Gettysburg, until the summer of 1864. Dr. William B. Lapham described him in his Bethel history as a "brave and capable officer" for which he was promoted to Brigadier General by brevet.

After the war, Edward engaged in agriculture and business. He cleared large tracts of land between Alder River and Vernon Street and built the large barn in 1874 according to Lapham. In 1886, Edwards was selected by the Democratic party as its gubernatorial nominee and received 55,289 votes to 68,850 for Joseph R. Bodwell, the Republican candidate. He was appointed by Governor Edwin C. Burleigh, a Republican, as Commissioner to represent Maine at the Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Edwards, who came to Bethel from Otisfield, married Maria Mason, daughter of Ayers Mason, a brother to Dr. Moses Mason, and they had seven children.

Clark's son Fred (1865-1947) was the next owner of the property. After his death, his widow Susan G. Edwards (1870-1961) sold the premises to Leona Flint on 22 November 1947. Mrs. Flint conveyed the property to Arthur "Spec" and Gladys Gurney in 1956. After Gladys Gurney's death in 1972, her children sold the premises to the present owners, John and Fumiko Head. A variety of renters have lived here during the Fred Edwards ownership, among them Clyde Hall, Lester Coolidge, Fred

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Gorman, and Asa Bartlett. Gardiner Gorman, who lived for many years on Mason Street, was born in this house. Albert McAllister, employed by Fred Edwards, lived here as well.

(3) Hometown Bakery

This Gothic Revival style house was built prior to 1857 by Rev. Zenas Thompson, first pastor of the Bethel Universalist Church. Its next owner was Oliver Hale Mason (1830-1891), a merchant, also interested in timberlands and lumbering. Mason was treasurer of the town for several years and a great sufferer from rheumatoid arthritis. He had built an extensive ramp system about the house to make access by his wheel chair easier, an early version of handicapped access. O.H. Mason, a nephew of Dr. Moses Mason, was much interested in the Bethel Universalist Church and left a legacy of \$100 for that congregation upon his death in 1891. He also willed \$100 to the Bethel Library. His first wife died in 1856 and he married second Olive Melissa Lee of Vernon, VT. From him, the property passed to his widow, Olive (1840-1937), who served as a trustee of Gould Academy from 1920 until her death. From her estate, the premises were sold to Frank E. Hanscom, Jr. for \$1431. As part of the divorce settlement in 1948, Hanscom conveyed the property to Marvel Hanscom, who had horses and a riding school here before selling to Dorothy Kirkpatrick in 1952. It was from the Kirkpatrick heirs that David and Marcia Dennison acquired the property in 1969. They once operated a book and card shop here before selling in 1993 to Lois M. Kilroy and Nancy Morris, who operate Hometown Bakery on this site.

(4) Dan and Julie Hart House

This house was built about 1914 by Albion Herrick, who later sold to Myron Bryant (1902-1961) in 1940. Following her husband's death in 1961, Doris G. Bryant (1905-1981) swapped houses with her son Richard, who died in 1993. Following his death, his widow Barbara sold to the present owners, Dan and Julie Hart, who moved here from Chapman Street in 1995. According to Ava Austin, Albion Herrick traded a violin for this land, which once belonged to Ed Smith. Smith wanted a violin for his daughter Eunice. That violin is still in existence, now owned by Eunice's son Barker Hopkins.

(5) Brian Tibbetts House

This house, long the home of John Allen, was built about the turn of the century. It was transferred to Henry O. Wilbur in 1911, who sold the premises to Edwin Smith (1862-1945) in 1912. It was later transferred to his wife Malinda (1867-1957), who conveyed the property to her granddaughter June Brown Greig in 1942. Twenty years later she sold it to William and Margaret Cousins. The Cousins sold to Leon (1900-1986) and Ruth (1905-1979) Wilson in 1972. The Wilson daughters (Barbara Bryant and Dorothy York) sold to the present owner Brian Tibbetts in 1986.

John Allen operated a meat cart; one day after cutting meat, he went into his horse's stall. Smelling blood, the horse kicked Allen in the head, killing him.

June Greig recalled her grandfather Edwin Smith had a man Mr. Briggs making cement blocks in his (Smith's) barn cellar. June, who lived with her parents in the upstairs apartment, spent a great deal of time watching Mr. Briggs work, no doubt, annoying him. When she bothered him too much, he would spit a cud of tobacco on her shoes. One day to retaliate against his spitting, she put a handful

of dry beans in his facing mortar. Her addition went unnoticed for several days until the beans began to sprout and the mortar crack.

Edwin Smith built the house now occupied by Greenleaf Funeral Home. After he completed the construction of the building, he decided it was too good to move six children into, so sold it and continued to live across the street.

Among the renters here through the years have been Guy and Leona Swan, the Rudy Royer family, Elgin and Hope Tibbetts, Warren Tibbetts and Sue Howe and family, Guy Swan, and Helen and Murray Cummings.

(6) Dale and Janine Buck House

June Greig sold land from her grandfather's lot to Jane Van Den Kerckhoven, who had a house built on the site by Frank Lowell in 1964 for \$17,000. Mrs. Van sold the property to Ronald Kendall in 1985. His son Mark lived here until it was sold to the present owners Dale and Janine Buck in 1994.

(7) Jason Smith Barn and House

The original barn on this site was built by Fred Edwards. Later it was torn down by Jason Smith and rebuilt. The land was deeded to Jason Smith from Fred's widow Susie Edwards in 1948. The house was built by Jason Smith in the early 1950s.

(8) Bennett House

This house was built about 1941 for Guy and Ruby Perkins by Jim Spinney and was long the home of Harold (1893-1974) and Cora Demeritt (1899-1979) Bennett. It was sold in 1979 to Arlan Jodrey who made some renovations. Through the years renters have included Lynwood and Gailey Wheeler, Dan and Julie Hart, Albert and Verna Raymond, Andi Colnes, Berry Goodman, Dorothy Orino, Harold White and family, and the present tenant Lynn Mason-Courtney and her husband John Courtney.

(9) Joe Bailey's Garage

Kenneth Morgan once lived on this site. He conveyed the premises to his brother Olin Morgan, who sold the property to Laurence Bailey, who later transferred it Jan and Larry Bennett. They sold to Joe Bailey, the present owner.

(10) Dennis Wilson House

This property once belonged to Dr. John Twaddle, whose widow conveyed the premises to Daniel Spearin (1875-1937) in 1931. From the Spearin estate it was acquired by Benjamin Philbrick in 1943 and the house was built about that time. Marshus Philbrick (1902-1944) lived here with his wife Mary Lowe Philbrick until his early death caused by tuberculosis. His widow lived here until 1959. From the latter date until 1965, the property was vacant until acquired by Dennis A. Wilson. Since that time, the house has been rented. The Gene Brown family lived here at one time. The current tenant is Charles Lufkin.

(11) Mobile Home

This is part of the Linwood Machia property since Arthur Shackford deeded a mobile home as well as the house to Linwood and Geraldine Machia in 1980. Tenants in the mobile home are currently Trish Clough and Harry Verrill.

(12) Linwood Machia House

The Machia property was transferred to Linwood and Geraldine Machia from Florence Machia in 1949. She had

apparently acquired the property from Ernest Cross. The property also had a garage built by Napoleon Machia on land acquired from Ernest Cross. Linwood Machia sold the property to Arthur and Eva Shackford in 1956; it was repurchased by Machia along with the mobile home in 1980 (mentioned previously in 11). He lives there today. The garage converted to a house by the Shackfords is now vacant.

(13) Robert Cole Mobile Home

The next site is the mobile home of Robert Cole. Just beyond this spot was where Parker Raimey once lived. Robert Gould Jr. has a mobile home here as well.

(14) Stuart and Jan Cross

The origins of this property extend back to at least the turn of the century. Early owners include Alberto Copeland, Albion Hall, and Daniel Spearin. In 1942, Susan E. Moody sold it to Charles Bryant, who transferred the land to Stuart Cross in 1946. Cross built the present house. His son Jack built a new garage for Cross Excavation beside this property in 1994.

(15) Jack and Sue Cross House

Jack and Sue Cross built their home here in 1978. This was once the site of a large barn belonging to Daniel Straw Hastings. Later Fred Clark had a log cabin here. Pearl Parker at one time lived in the log cabin.

(16) Lucy Knipe House

Near the Cross house is the home of the late Lucy Knipe. It is now used as a seasonal home by her children William Knipe and Janice Briggs. Beyond that is a clearing owned by Phillippe Rolfe.

(17) Mona Lowe Mobile Home

Beside this is a mobile home belonging to Mona Lowe. Present tenants are Michael Taylor and Tammy Standeven. Beyond this is a lot owned by Steven Keane.

(18) Timothy and Teresa O'Connor House

This house was built in 1994 on land purchased from Steven Keane.

(19) Gary Belanger Mobile Home

The mobile home owned by Gary Belanger is a recent development.

(20) Dennis A. Wilson Mobile Home

This lot was acquired by C. Roy Murphy and Dorethea Valley Murphy from Merle McKinnis in 1956. They sold to Ferrol Witter in 1959. Ferrol and Marie Witter conveyed the premises to James and Jill Moffett in 1975. Dennis Wilson acquired the property in 1978. Tenants have included David Daye, Chris Merrill and currently Brian and Cathy Hanley.

(21) Larry Smith Home

Larry Smith's residence was acquired in 1986 from Casco Northern Bank. Previously the property had been owned by Phyllis and Jason Smith and Ferroll P. Witter. It is now rental property.

(22) Unoccupied Structure

At present, this structure, owned by a New Jersey resident, is unoccupied. Joseph Baker once lived here. At one time Sidney Jodrey owned a barn here and kept oxen. Arlan Jodrey remembers when there was a large field here and he used to help Sid Jodrey hay on this lot.

(return to the corner of Vernon and Main streets, west side of Vernon Street)

PRESIDENT'S COLUMN

This column, my first as president, comes at a time when Bethel is growing and changing rapidly. Does this threaten the small-town historic charm which makes Bethel special to both residents and visitors?

Yes, it does. But Historical Society members and other concerned citizens can affect what happens. A good start was made by citizens responding to the 1995 Community Survey by Bethel's Comprehensive Planning Committee. Protecting the town's historic character was strongly supported by survey respondents. Citizens will have further opportunities to express their views at future public forums, as the Comprehensive Planning process continues.

Please keep alert for such forums, and other opportunities to advise town officials of the importance of preserving the town's historical assets.

Walter Hatch

NEW LIFE MEMBERS

Marjorie Farwell Anderson, Topsham
Carolyn Campbell, West Bethel
Mary Clyne, Mowhawk, NY
Joan S. Goodhew, Atlanta, GA
Robert W. Goodwin, Norway
Frederick and Penelope Milton, Oakdale, MA
Dennis and Rita Wilson, Bethel
Raymond and Evelyn York, Fayetteville, NC

IN MEMORIAM

Died, 30 January 1996, Lucretia Booth Evans, Bronx, NY, life member

Died, 1 March 1996, Winifred Page, Frenchville, senior member

Died, 20 June 1996, Donald S. Brown, Bethel, life member

Died, 1 September 1996, Glenn Swan, Mexico, senior member

Died, 19 September 1996, Euphemia Dick Hastings, West Paris, life member

Died, 2 December 1996, Mary Folsom Champe, Rumford, life member

(Vernon Street)

(23) Garey York House

This lot once went with the Calvin Bisbee property next door. It was acquired by Chesley Saunders in 1943 and he had the present house built. It was sold by his heirs in 1965 to Harold and Violet Clukey, who conveyed the premises to Earl M. Warrington in 1966. Warrington sold to Marilyn Myers in 1975; she sold to Garey and Dorothy York, the present owners, in 1983.

(24) Rev. Donald and Janet Coverdale House

The origins of this house extend back to the late 19th century and its first owner Calvin Bisbee, prominent Bethel businessman. After his wife Fanny's death, the property had a number of owners including Helen B. Packard, Chesley Saunders, Vernon Smiley, Jr., Asa Smith, and John and Margaret Trinward, who acquired it in 1957. John Trinward practiced dentistry in Bethel for more than

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SOCIETY SALES DEPARTMENT

The Society maintains a selection of modestly priced gifts and historical publications. They may be ordered at the prices listed below. Maine residents must include 6% sales tax. Orders under \$10 should include \$1 for postage and handling; those over \$10 but under \$20 should include \$2 and all those over \$20 should add \$3 to cover mailing expenses.

Moses Mason House Tile \$3.50

Stationery (package of ten sheets and ten envelopes) \$2 each (Moses Mason House, Bethel Railroad Station, Summer House, Bethel Covered Bridge)

Booklets (The Family Farm, Made in Bethel) 75 cents each

Dr. Moses Mason and His House \$1

Molly Ockett \$2

Maps and Atlases

1880 Map of Bethel Hill \$2

1880 Map of Town of Bethel \$2

1878 Bird's Eye View of Bethel Hill \$1

1858 Atlas of Oxford County \$7.50

T-Shirts

Moses Mason Museum (Adult, S, M, L, XL) \$8

Moses Mason Museum (Child, 4-6-8-10-12-14) \$7

Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Adults, S, M, L, XL) \$8

Sudbury Canada 1768-1796 (Child, 4-6-8-10-12-14) \$8

Post Cards: Dr. Moses Mason, Agnes Mason, Moses Mason House 10 cents each

Tote Bags (Moses Mason Museum logo) small \$7.50 large \$11.50

Placemats, 4 season, set of four Bethel scenes \$7.50

Books

Carrie Wight, *A History of Newry* \$5

Bethel, *Maine Cemeteries* \$9.50

Russell, *Indian New England Before the Mayflower* \$15.95

Little, *American Decorative Wall Painting 1700-1850* \$9.95

Crosby, *From an Old Leather Trunk* \$5

Lapham, *History of Woodstock, Maine* \$19.95

Maine the Pine State: From Prehistory to the Present \$29.95

Bennett, *The White Mountains* \$14.99

Wight, *Wild River Wilderness* \$5

Parkman, *The Gould Academy Story* \$7.50

Maine in the Early Republic \$29.95

Hubka, *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn: The Connected Farm Buildings of New England* \$22.95

Bennett, *Bethel, Maine: An Illustrated History* \$39.95

Crosby, *I Was A Summer Boarder* \$5

Eva Bean, *East Bethel Road* \$50

Bennett, *Oxford County Maine: A Guide to Its Historic Architecture* \$18

Lapham, *History of Bethel, Maine, 1768-1890* \$45

Shirrefs, *The Richardson Lakes* Quality Paperback \$29.95 Cloth \$39.95

Members of the Bethel Historical Society are entitled to a 10% discount for purchases totaling \$10 or more. Please send orders to the Society at P.O. Box 12, Bethel, ME 04217-0012. If the items you ordered are in stock, they will be sent by return mail. For further information, please call toll free 1-800-824-2910.

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thirty years, first on Main Street, but toward the end of his career at an office attached to this house. The Trinwards sold to the Coverdales in 1988.

(25) Patricia Early House

This bungalow style house was built in 1926 by Arthur (1890-1966) and Eva (1891-1977) Herrick. Eva Herrick sold the property to Parker Connor and from his family the property was acquired by Richard Bryant. In 1961, Richard Bryant and his mother switched houses on Vernon Street as already noted. Doris Bryant (1905-1981) sold the premises to Patricia A. Early in the 1970s.

(26) Thelma Domkowski House

This house dates to about the turn of the century. Among its early owners were Lottie L. Barker and Charles L. Pingree. In 1913, Pingree sold the premises to Henry Austin, who for years was the local representative for Central Maine Power. After his wife's death, his son sold the property to Henry Domkowski in 1966. After her husband's death in 1994, the property passed to his wife Thelma, who lives in Gorham, Maine but retains the house. Present tenants are Debbie and Randy Gilbert.

(27) Maureen Ginther House

The origins of this house extend back to the turn of the century as well. Owners have included Daniel S. Hastings (1840-1925), Myron Bryant, and Leon Noyes, who acquired the premises in 1946. He sold to Francis Noyes, who conveyed the property to Marah Webster (1886-1983) and her sister Mina Stevens (1882-1976). After the death of Marah Webster, the property passed to Henry and Thelma Domkowski. Thelma Domkowski sold it to the present owner, Maureen Ginther. Among the many tenants of this property have been Edith Clement, Roy Moore, Ruth Hastings, Ida and Methy Packard, Gard Brown, Fred Hall, Walter and Norma Jodrey, Ted Dunham, Roderick Sidelinger, Gerard Williams, Elden Greenleaf, Jeff Mills, and Mary Newcomb. Doris Bryant had the picket fence removed during her ownership (1925-1946). Arlan Jodrey was born here during the 1936 flood. Present tenants are Joe Wheeler and Jock Clark.

(28) Greenleaf Funeral Home

This building was constructed about 1920 by Ed Smith who lived on the opposite side of the street. Alton Bacon and crew assisted with the construction and Guy Morgan did the electrical work. It was acquired by Sherman Greenleaf (1893-1962) in 1933 from Harry Jordan (1871-1946). Here Greenleaf carried on his veterinarian business along with the funeral home. His veterinarian business closed after his death, but his son Elden carried on the funeral home until 1984 when the business was sold to Brad Raymond. He removed the animal hospital building, built a new garage, and did much redecorating of the property. Edna York lives in the house portion of the building.

(29) Grace and Alberta Olson House

The origins of this house extend back to the early days of the 20th century. It was long the property of the Littlehale family. Lucien Littlehale sold it to Guy Swan in 1948. He later deeded it to Greenleaf Funeral Home with the condition that he could live there as long as he and his wife lived, then it would be sold to pay for their funeral expenses. Mabel Greenleaf (1892-1984) conveyed the premises to Guy Jr. and Marilyn Parker for \$4000 in 1974. The Parkers sold the property to Harvey and Barbara Sweetser in 1976 and they sold to the present owners.

Others who have lived here are Guy Rice, Lewellyn and Mary Fogg (who was nicknamed "Singing Mary") and Dorothy Childs.

(30) Isabel Stone Mobile Home

Isabel Stone had a mobile home moved to this site following sale and demolition of her home on Cross Street in 1996.

(31) Jack and Barbara Brooks House

The origins of this house extend back to the late 19th century. It was long in the Littlehale family until the sale to Jack Brooks in 1976. Among the tenants on this property have been Philip and Sadie Brooks, Malcolm and Virginia Mundt, David and Irma Thompson, Robert and Margaret Record, Patty Bordeaux, Arthur and Eva Herrick, Eddie Day, and Philip Graham, the station agent. Barbara Herrick Brown was born in this house in 1914. She recalls Augustus Littlehale and his wife Jennie Littlehale, who smoked a pipe.

(32) Geraldine Shimanura House

This house was acquired by Ethel R. Sanborn (1889-1975) in 1949 from Charles Bryant after she sold the ancestral farm on Intervale Road to Charles and Edith Eypner. Here she lived with her son Harry (1922-1975) until her death. Harry hauled trash for many years. After Mrs. Sanborn's death, her daughter Jeanette Potsaid sold the property to Ryoza and Geraldine Shimanura.

(33) Arlan and Eleanor Jodrey House

Arlan and Eleanor Jodrey's house, built in 1941, was moved from Waterford in 1958 where it was used to house employees of the Portland Pipeline Corp. It was transformed by the Jodreys through the years to the attractive house it is today.

(34) Arlan and Eleanor Jodrey Rental Property

This house, built by James Spinney, was long in the Deegan family, dating back to the 1950s. It was acquired in 1975 by Arlan and Eleanor Jodrey from Mary K. Deegan, and used as rental property. Among those who have rented the property are Gerry and Ellen Durgin, Jerry O'Connor, Patricia Pratt, Scott and Sandra Dennis, Carl and Irene Pike, Alfred Spooner (who once managed the IGA store) and the present tenant Becky Bean.

(35) Mabel Robinson House

This tiny house was once owned by Henry Perkins, father of Ernest Perkins. In 1961, Ernest Perkins sold the property to Laura Inman for \$450. Inman willed the premises to her sister, Mabel Robinson. It is now owned by her son Dale Robinson, an assistant police chief in Manchester, NH.

(36) Mundt-Allen American Legion Post

The Mundt-Allen American Legion Post of Bethel acquired this land, known as White's Pasture, from Laura Inman in 1969, building the present post there after moving its headquarters from Main Street. The deed specified that the construction could not begin for five years and that the property could not be sold while the grantee lived.

(37) Verna Dyke House

This house was built by Frank Lowell and Ernest Blake in 1953 and was sold that same year to Sidney (1912-1966) and Verna Dyke. Among the tenants who have lived here are Dwight Merrill, Kenneth Ramage and Frances Gunther.

(38) Wilbur and Vicky Brown Myers House

This house was built about 1950 by Frank Lowell, who lived there until 1972 when he moved to Newry. Some of the material for this house came from Harry King's barn which was demolished on Mechanic Street. Lowell sold the property to his son and daughter-in-law, David and Lillian Lowell in 1972. They conveyed the premises to Edward and Debra Brumbelow and from the Bumbelows it was acquired by the present owners.

(39) Reginald and Mary Morrill Brown House

This house was long the home of Robert and Elizabeth Smith Mills. It was built by Mills in the 1940s and sold to the present owners in 1987.

(40) Drew and Judith Webster House

This house was built in the early years of the 20th century by Lincoln Cummings (1860-1947). He got quick lime in his eye while building this house and went to Boston to have his eye removed. From the estate of Lincoln Cummings, title to the house passed to Richard Davis (1916-1994), who sold the property to Lee and Virginia Hutchins for \$1900 in 1948. It was acquired by the present owners in 1967.

There used to be a dance hall nearby, built on railroad springs.

(41) Rev. Nathan Seckinger House

This house was built around 1900 by Martin Lyden who came to Vernon Street from the nearby Irish neighborhood. He sold to Alton Payne in 1925 and Payne sold the same year to John K. Gill. In 1935 Mary V. Gill conveyed the premises to Mildred A. Wilbur. She transferred the property to Arthur and Ruth Cummings in 1961 and they named it "Oleo Acres." After Arthur's death, Ruth sold the property to Rev. Nathan Seckinger. In 1936, the flood came to the baseboards in this house. The present tenant is Rev. Richard Mowery of the Bethel Alliance Church.

(42) Richard and Margaret Ferris House

This house was built on land once owned by Fred Edwards in the 1940s and it was long the property of Phyllis Smith. She sold to the present owners Richard and Margaret Ferris in 1987. Jim Bennett is the current tenant.

(43) Eden Ridge Condos

The road to the Eden Ridge Condos, built in the late 1980s by Avery Angevine and Barry Saxe, leads up on the hillside at this juncture.

(44) Harold and Bonita Clough House

The origins of this house extend back to at least the turn of the century. It was acquired by the present owners in 1970. Napoleon and Florence Machia lived here for many years. The land was left by Minnie Cross to her son Ernest and at his death to Edgar and Florence Cross Machia.

(45) Cross House

This house dates from the turn of the century and has been owned by the Cross family since the 1920s. Present owners are Stuart and Jack Cross. Tom and Tricia Henley are the current tenants. There was once a barn with this property.

(46) Stephen Cross House

This house was built in the 1940s and was sold by Norton Cross to Stephen L. Cross in 1984.

(47) Lawrence and Barbara Young House

Lawrence and Barbara Young's house dates back to the
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1960s. There was once a house here where William and Lillian Young lived, but it was torn down. This was also the site of the ski-tow which operated here from the mid-1940s until the development of the Sunday River Ski Resort in the late 1950s. The rope from this tow was taken to Sunday River and used there in the early days of that development. The group operating the Vernon Street ski tow was officially the Ski and Outing Club with the following officers in 1949: president, John P. Howe; vice president, Addison Saunders; secretary, Wilbur Myers; treasurer, Stanley Davis.

(48) Linwood Westleigh Mobile Home

Linwood Westleigh has lived on this site since the late 1980s.

(49) Henry Westleigh House

This house dates back to the 1940s and was long the home of Grace Westleigh. After her death, her husband Henry moved here from his farm in Albany. The land was purchased from Charles Bryant.

(50) Alan and Christina Lowe House

This property, formerly owned by Dr. John Twaddle, has been in the Lowe family since the First World War, originally the home of Alister and Rose Lowe; they were followed by their son Charles, who died in 1985. The premises were deeded to Charles' nephew Alan by his aunts and his father, Mary Lowe Foster, Helen Lowe Kraul, and Robert Lowe in 1987. Alan Lowe has also built a log cabin in the woods here as well, which is rental property.

(51) Michael and Celina Jodrey

This house was built in 1993. Celina Jodrey operates a day care center here.

(52) Norton and Phyllis Cross House

This house was built by Avon Virge assisted by the legendary James "Jim" Spinney in the 1940s. It was acquired by Wilbur and Pat Sweetser in 1950; they sold to the present owners Norton and Phyllis Cross in 1956. The house previously on this site was moved by Alden Wilson for Raymond and Adeline Dexter to Elm Street.

Just before this, there was a small house belonging to the barber, Herschel Walker, that was removed in 1989. Norton and Phyllis Cross bought the land and building with the proviso that Herschel could live there during his lifetime with enough land reserved for a garden.

(53) Pat Sweetser House

This house was first a camp rented to Aubrey Daye, who made extensive renovations. When the Sweetsters returned from Massachusetts, they moved here. There was once a house and mill here owned by Bill Mack, who later sold to Fred Edwards.

(54) Arthur Widberg Camp

This camp was built in the 1940s by Richard Lawrence. Later owners were Leonard Kimball and Edward and Ruby Widberg. Arthur Widberg of Canton, MA, son of Edward and Ruby, owns the property today.

(55) House Site

The origins of the house that once stood here extend back to the early years of the 20th century; it was long the property of Joseph Harrington. He sold the property in 1952 to Lance Knowles, who conveyed the premises to Merle McKinnis in 1954. McKinnis sold to Carmen and Dorothea Murphy in 1956. They sold to Ferrol and Marie



Hunters and their sons gathered in the door of the Cross barn on Vernon Street, November 1957: front row, Albert Kimball, Arlan Jodrey, Stuart Cross holding Jack Cross, Edward Widberg, Harry Kimball, back row standing, Stuart Cross, Peter Matson, Arnold Plasman, Norton Cross, Rodney Kimball. Photo courtesy of Arlan Jodrey.

Witter in 1959. In 1974, George Howard, Sr. became the owner. Crystal Howard sold the property to Dennis Wilson in 1976 after the house burned, killing Mary Howard and her daughter Lisa in 1966. It is now the property of the Rices who live next door.

(56) William and Louise Rice

This property goes back to the turn of the century and has had several owners: Joseph Harrington, Lance Knowles, Ferrol and Marie Witter, and Crystal Howard, who sold it in 1970 to Dennis Wilson, who conveyed it in 1992 to the present owners William and Louise Rice. Florus "Red" Merrill and wife Mildred rented this property for a number of years as did Tom Barton. Aubrey Daye renovated it for Dennis Wilson while he and his wife lived there.

Just beyond here, Tim Sweatt had a garage and a small camp.

(57) Peggy Stone Estes House

This house was built about 1960 and has had numerous owners: James Stone, Edward and Sharon Rice, Dennis and Rita Wilson, Lawrence and Mary Davis who purchased the property in 1988 and sold it recently to Peggy Stone Estes. Tenants here have included Jeff Fleet and Lauri Kennagh.

(58) Ernest and Anita Mason House

This house was built about 1964 by Warren G. Blake. It was acquired by the present owners in 1969.

(59) Oliver and Jeannette St. Pierre Mobile Home

Ernest G. ("Red") Blake was taxed for a house lot here, so he did some landscaping and moved a mobile home to the site. It was sold in 1988 to the present owners Oliver and Jeannette St. Pierre by his widow Elizabeth A. Blake.

Vernon Street is an interesting mixture today of commercial and residential properties. Some of Bethel's most prominent citizens continue to live here although no one has run for Governor of Maine in the 20th century as Clark Edwards did in the 19th century. Much has happened through the years here and this street has experienced many changes. The portion of Vernon Street nearest Main where some of the earliest homes on the street are clustered appear to be well preserved. This street is becoming home to growing numbers of Bethel residents and no doubt will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Following two professional assessments of the Society's operations in the 1980s sponsored by the American Association of Museums, the Board of Trustees formed a Long Range Planning Committee in 1986 to provide some guidance as to the organization's future direction. For the past decade, this Committee has worked diligently to solve the Society's increasingly complex problem of securing fireproof and more adequate storage for its collections, which have largely overflowed the available space at the Dr. Moses Mason House. The growth of the Society's collections is but one of the challenges facing our organization. There is far too little available space to exhibit these collections, the research room is often too small for all the researchers who come to work, collections are not always accessible because of space limitations, the museum store area is very limited, and staff and volunteers are usually working in very cramped conditions to provide all the services expected of our very dynamic organization.

The committee carefully considered several solutions to this situation before proposing to build a structure in the back yard of the Dr. Moses Mason House. Many members and friends of the Society came to believe that this was less than ideal since so much of the green space around our historic house would be forever lost despite the effort to make this change as unobtrusive as possible.

Last summer an unexpected offer came to our attention from the Bethel Inn. The Inn wanted to move all its guest accommodations to the other side of the street and would sell the Elms property to the Society to provide for the additional space so clearly needed. During this fall and winter, the Society trustees and several committees, particularly the Building Committee, have been meeting to decide if this appeared to be the right direction for the organization to go. It certainly warrants deep consideration. The property adjoins the Dr. Moses Mason House lot. Its acquisition would enhance the Society's visibility on the Bethel Common, the heart of the historic area of Bethel. It would also provide us more protection from development having an adverse effect upon the historic fabric of the area. It would preserve a National Register property while making it a more useful one through adaptive reuse. It would provide space for exhibits, research, craft demonstrations, educational programming, professional storage for collections, staff and volunteer work areas, as well as an expanded museum store. The adjoining Dr. Moses Mason House would continue to function as one of Maine's outstanding period house museums and as a convenient meeting space for the Society and others..

To accomplish all this—buy the building, adapt it to Society purposes, and provide for its maintenance and operation—is going to be the greatest challenge in the Society's history. Already a Capital Campaign is being organized, and the computerization of the Society is expected to be accomplished soon in preparation for this effort. Other Committees and volunteers will be doing their part in the days ahead. So that members and friends can learn more about this project, a special meeting of the Society will be held on Saturday, March 8 at 10 A.M. at the Dr. Moses Mason House. I hope you will attend and get involved. If you cannot be present, please call our toll free number (1-800-824-2910) and give us your comments.

—Walter Hatch, President

BOOK REVIEW

THE RICHARDSON LAKES: JEWELS IN THE RANGELEY CHAIN. By Herbert P. Shirrefs. Edited with a Foreword by Randall H. Bennett. (Bethel, Maine: Bethel Historical Society, 1995. Pp. 485. Cloth \$39.95. Paper \$29.95)

As camp owners at Lower Richardson Lakes, we were thrilled to finally obtain a copy of Herb Shirrefs' wonderful book about the Richardson Lakes, those "Jewels in the Rangeley Chain." Most of us at the Lake had known of Herb's project for years and were delighted with the final result. Even if it had been published with no text, just having all of those priceless photographs assembled in one place is well worth the price of the book. Fortunately, there is a text and it is fascinating. This publication will become a reference book with underlined passages and ear-marked pages for all who spend time at the Lakes. It is also the kind of book which can be re-read in sections as any chapter by itself will provide a good read.

We particularly liked the sections about the sporting and the family-owned camps. The Lakes attracted so many interesting people from all walks of life who came for fishing, hunting, and the natural beauty. That fact has not changed, as even today, there is a waiting list of people who want to buy camps or obtain a lease on which to build. Considering that there is still no electricity, no plumbing, and in many cases, no roads, the appeal is as strong as ever.

We are thankful that Herb Shirrefs loved the area so much that he devoted many years gathering this material and that it fell into the capable hands of Randall Bennett to help pull the loose ends together. It is a very special place and this book captures the magic.

Ted and Janette Orino
Rumford, Maine

31st ANNUAL MEETING

The 31st annual meeting of the Bethel Historical Society was held on September 5 at Society headquarters, beginning with a delicious pot luck supper coordinated by the Special Projects Committee headed by Persis Post. Following the supper, vice president Walter Hatch, presiding in the absence of president Charles Raymond, called the meeting to order. He thanked the Special Projects Committee for their efforts, Barbara H. Brown for the table flowers, and Gerry Howe for the centerpiece.

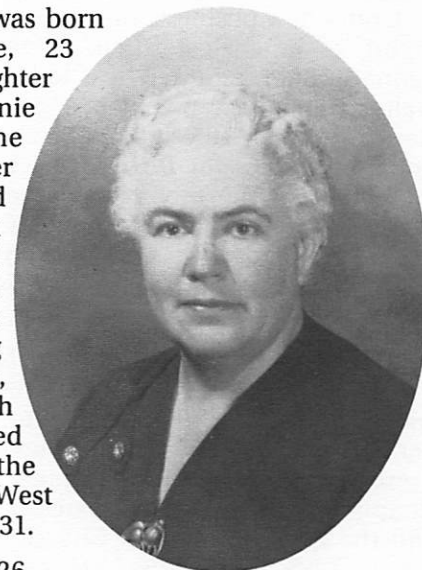
Mr. Hatch called for a moment of silence for all members who had died since the last annual meeting: Lillian Bartlett, Martha Von Zintl, Mervin Fairbanks, Olive Head, Ellen Coffin, David Robinson, Evaline Kimball, Donald Brown, James Dock, Lucretia Evans, Ruby Emery, Ernest Perkins, Althea Noyes, and Glenn Swan.

The vice president reviewed some of the highlights of the past year: the celebration of the Society's 30th anniversary during Maine Museum Day festivities on June 8, several successful special and regular events held, more than fifty new members added to the rolls, over fifty donations to artifacts, photographs, and other memorabilia added to the collections, publication of the Richardson Lakes book, nearly \$9000 contributed to the annual fund campaign, the bequest of an inlaid table from the late Robert Silver, three historic preservation awards to members of the community, and all-Bethel history series of programs at the monthly meetings in honor of the town's bicentenary.

(continued on page 8)

MEMBER PROFILE

Olive Akers Head was born in Andover, Maine, 23 August 1903, the daughter of Lewis C. and Annie Andrews Akers. She attended Andover schools and graduated from Andover High School in 1920, and from Gorham Normal School in 1922. She began her teaching career in Woods Hole, MA, returning to teach in Rumford, followed later by service in the two-room school at West Bethel from 1926 to 1931.



Olive A. Head, ca. 1940s

On 26 August 1926, she married at Andover Paul B. Head of West Bethel. They established their home at West Bethel, where they raised four children, John, Arthur, David and Mary. Mrs. Head served as Assistant Postmaster at West Bethel for many years and in 1947 assumed a more active role in the daily operations of the family owned business, Head's Store, near their residence.

A long-time member of a number of community organizations, including the West Bethel Union Church, Pleasant Valley Grange, Oxford Pomona Grange, the American Legion Auxiliary, and the Veterans of World War I Auxiliary, she also was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and a Paul Harris Fellow of Rotary International.

A life member of the Bethel Historical Society, Mrs. Head possessed a keen memory and was often helpful in answering genealogical and historical questions. She enjoyed reading the Courier and frequently followed up with additional information on some item she saw there. She also was a generous donor to the Annual Fund each year.

Mrs. Head died on 24 March 1996. In her will, she made a bequest to the Society, which by vote of the Society's Board of Trustees this fall has become the Paul B. and Olive A. Head Memorial Fund. At some future date, income from this Fund will be used to support specific educational projects and programs of the Society.

DANIEL EMERSON PRESENTED 1996 DR. MOSES MASON AWARD

Daniel Emerson, a Telstar Regional High School junior, was presented in June the Dr. Moses Mason Award for outstanding achievement in the field of local history. Each year, the Society offers the award consisting of a certificate of commendation and a \$100 U.S. Savings Bond to the high school student who writes the best essay in local history. It is presented at the annual awards program of the winner's school. This year's award was presented by president Charles Raymond to Emerson for his essay titled *Andover, Maine: An Overview of Early Education*.

(Annual Meeting, continued from page 7)

Under new business, the Nominating Committee consisting of Jane Hosterman, chair, Arlene Lowell, and Kenneth Bohr reported the following slate: president, Walter Hatch; vice president, Alvin Barth; secretary and clerk of the trustees, Paul McGuire; treasurer, Roger Conant; trustees for three years, Charles Raymond and Arlan Jodrey. The report was accepted without dissent. Retiring secretary Shireen Vincent was thanked for all her fine service and much appreciation was expressed to the two retiring trustees, Jane Hosterman and John Head for their hard work on the board and in other capacities.

The 1996 Marjorie MacArthur Noll Volunteer Service Award was presented to Arlene Brown in honor of her outstanding service to the Society and that of her late husband, Don. The Browns were honored for researching and presenting two programs to the Society, a history of Chapman Street which appeared in the Fall 1985 Courier and the Bethel Methodist Church later published in the Winter 1993 and Spring 1994 issues. Don was a former trustee (1985-1990) and a generous donor of photographs to the Society. Arlene chairs the Society's Music Committee and headed the Parade Committee for the Indian Raid Bicentenary. Life members, both have been generous financial contributors to the Society's Annual Fund.

Randall H. Bennett, Society Curator of Collections, announced the "Gift of the Month," a scale model of the Bethel railroad station which stood on Railroad Street from 1865 to 1968. It was made by James Auman of Warren, New Jersey and donated by the builder. It depicts the station in the 1920s and is painted gray and green, the colors of the Grand Trunk Railroad, which owned the building in that period.

During the program portion of the meeting, Dr. Joseph Conforti, director of the American and New England Studies Program at the University of Southern Maine, spoke on the evolution of the New England town from the 17th century to the 1840s in honor of Bethel's bicentenary.

THE BETHEL SOLDIERS OF '61

From the pages of the Oxford Advertiser, 23 July 1886, compiled by Judge C.F. Whitman of Norway

The Rebel Gen. Early by his raid during the latter part of the summer of 1864 frightened the inhabitants of Washington about out of their wits and drew the attention of Gen. Grant to the situation in the Shenandoah Valley, who placed Sheridan in command and directed him to "go in." Accordingly we find on the morning of Sept. 19th, Early holding the west bank of the Opequan Creek coving Winchester with Sheridan in his front at Berryville. The Rebel position had been thoroughly fortified and was naturally strong. "To assail it our army had to advance through a narrow ravine shut in by steep thickly wooded hills, form in an irregular undulating valley in the enemy's front, advance through a wood and attack desperately his center while flanking his left." This was the position that Sheridan had resolved to carry by assault. At ten A.M. everything was ready and when our troops had cleared the woods, an open valley appeared across which in the edge of another piece of woods lay the enemy. "Forward Grover's Division."

At the head of his men Gen. Grover without waiting to ascertain what others did resolutely charged across the



Arlene G. Brown (r) accepts the 1996 Marjorie MacArthur Noll Volunteer Service Award from presenter, Mary C. Keniston at the 31st Annual Meeting

open field and carried the first line of the enemy's works capturing prisoners and killing the Rebel Gen. Rhodes. No time was to be lost and Early to save his lines promptly hurled two Divisions upon Grover pushing him back with fearful loss. The Gallant Grover however was equal to the emergency. He directed his men to fall back to a certain position, halt and face to the front, and ordered Captain Bradbury of the 1st Me. Battery to post two guns in a favorable position; he calmly waited.

The encounter-charge of the enemy who confidently expected to sweep Grover before him and win the battle. It did seem that it was already lost to our side. The Rebels rushed forward to seize the guns when they were received most bravely in front while a volley on their flanks and rear from troops which had been rallied sent them rushing back across the open field. Grover's line being reformed was advanced over most of the ground it had lost. The fighting was desperate and was carried on till toward night with little advantage to either side.

And now a shout from the right announced that the movement to turn the enemy's left was in successful progress. At once a telling fire swept along our front, and the whole line moved forward with cheers and shouts while the enemy fiercely assailed in front and flank, retreated in haste. They were pressed by our cavalry which followed on the heels of the retreating enemy through Winchester and beyond taking many prisoners. It was a brilliant victory but our loss was heavy, having fallen largely on Grover's Division of the 19th Corps, which bore the brunt of the contest.

Early retreated to Fisher's Hill, where two days after he was found in one of the strongest position in the valley. Using the same tactics as at the Opequan, Sheridan had the 8th Corps make a detour and fall on the flank and rear of the enemy while the 6th and 19th Corps should charge in front. The fight was short and sharp. At the sound of the shout on the far right, the center was fiercely assailed and broken and Early was sent "whirling up the valley." The campaign being ended Sheridan left on a "flying visit" to Washington. The army was stationed in the vicinity of Cedar Creek, "on three crests or ridges." The 8th Corps in front, the 19th corps half a mile behind it, with the 6th corps to the right and rear of the 19th.



Ginther Residence, Vernon Street, ca. 1900

At two o'clock on the morning of the 19th of October our pickets heard the rustling of the underbrush, the crackling of twigs and the tramp of enemy feet and just as daylight began to glimmer in the east, the Rebel yell aroused our soldiers from their slumbers, and a volley of musketry told our astonished troops that a hostile army was upon them. Gen. Grover took in the situation at a glance, "Tell the Brigade Commanders to move their men into the trenches," he ordered. It was too late. The 8th Corps was already flying to the rear and the 19th Corps was reformed and posted in a wood on our left.

On our arrival of Sheridan from Winchester "twenty miles away," which in fact was much less than that distance, courage was infused into the hearts of our defeated men, and they believed what he said when he told them that, "if I had been here this never would have happened."

The 19th Corps was attacked about one o'clock p.m. when having thrown up a breast work of rocks and rails the enemy was easily repulsed. Our troops were now ready for a counter assault and in a short time was given the order.

(to be continued in the next issue)

EDITOR'S CORNER

An alert reader has pointed out an error in the last installment of the L.E. Davis memoirs. It should read: "There was a total of 421 shares of the Bethel Airport Corporation sold and paid for at \$10 per share. With this amount of \$4120 available..." The amount in the last issue was \$412 and should be \$4120 as corrected above.

In history, one works with the best information available at the time. Those doing historical research and writing are always aware that new information may come to light that will forever change what is believed at any given time.

In the Winter 1992 issue of the *Courier*, an architectural drawing of Goodwin Wiley's house that once stood on Church Street was published. In the caption, we believed at the time that it was the work of celebrated Maine architect George Coombs of Lewiston. It is now clear from the research done by Roger W. Reed, formerly of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, that this design was done by William H. Stevens (1818-1880) in 1874. The drawings for this Italianate style residence are, in Reed's view, the only surviving example on which Stevens' signature alone appears. George Coombs formed a partnership with Stevens the following year (1875). This fact helps explain our confusion. SRH

REFLECTIONS OF A HALF CENTURY

by L. E. Davis

(continued from the last issue)

Mother Frances Davis came to stay with us at Bethel on April 3, 1949 right after we got back from our winter vacation. She had been sick most of the previous winter and needed to have regular attendance by a doctor. She was confined to her bed practically all the time and was a great care for Marie. In August of that year the situation had reached the point where other arrangements had to be made or I would have two sick people on my hands. So

(continued on page 10)

Join the Bethel Historical Society, Western Maine's historical research center.

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(Reflections, continued from page 9)

after talking with her other relatives it was decided to place her in a nursing home. We took her to Mrs. Douglass' Nursing Home in South Bridgton, Maine, which proved to be an excellent place and she was comfortable there.

I was appointed her guardian in January 1950 and handled her accounts until her death in June 1953.

Another grandson was born in 1952; Jonathan James Dock came along in July of that year.

Business followed a rather routine pattern during the years 1952, 1953, 1954, and 1955 with prices and wages increasing each year, also taxes of all kinds. In one of those years, I believe it was either 1953 or 1954, Richard and I gave to our crews a hospitalization plan instead of a raise in pay which has been a great benefit to the employees and their families since under this plan each employee and the members of their immediate family gets their hospital bills paid with a rather broad limit for any sickness or accident which requires hospitalization. Also the employee gets a good weekly payment for loss of time caused by sickness or accident.

Another happening which has given me a great deal of pleasure and satisfaction was to have been chosen to serve on the Board of Trustees of Gould Academy in the year 1945. Perhaps one of the particular reasons for this is the fact that I am the only member of the board who has never been to college. That fact might have been an oversight on the part of the other trustees who elect new members to fill any vacancy on the board, or it could have been that eligible prospects were very scarce at that time. However it happened, I have been very happy to work and serve with this group of men and hope for many more years of it. They are an excellent group to work with.

[Editor's Note: Marie Swan Davis became ill in the summer of 1959 and her daughter Phyllis believes that may be the reason why the memoir ends abruptly in that year. Marie had surgery from which she did not recover, dying of cardio-renal failure on October 31, 1959. Leslie Davis did not long survive her, dying in Florida of Hodgkin's Disease on February 14, 1961. They are both buried in Riverside Cemetery, just across the Northwest Bethel Road from the airport in which he played a central role in establishing. For the record, he failed to record the births of three grandchildren, Stephen Varick Dock, July 31, 1945; Cathy Davis, January 20, 1957; Nancy Hannah Dock, March 3, 1958.]

A new series of recollections will be presented in the next issue, featuring the diary of William Straw Hastings (1901-1943), a farmer and surveyor who lived in East Bethel.



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